

et après  
les crêpes suzettes...  
CHARTREUSE

SUNDAY TIMES

# weekly review

AUGUST 8 1971

LEGGE Locks

17



Jonathan Jackson, brother of George. He was shot dead in the Soledad Brothers' trial for allegedly murdering a prison guard.  
George Jackson, one of the three Soledad Brothers, who faces trial for allegedly murdering a prison guard.  
Angela Davis, who awaits trial on charges arising from the Marin County shootout.

**GODFREY HODGSON** pieces together the sinister chain of events in a Californian prison which lies behind two forthcoming trials destined to be the latest battleground of racial conflict in America



McClain, a San Quentin convict, brandishes a revolver inside Marin County Hall of Justice during the kidnap attempt a year ago. A shotgun has been taped to the neck of Judge Haley. At right, with a pistol tossed to him by Jonathan Jackson, is another convict.

## SOLEDAD: BIRTH OF A RACIAL VENDETTA

A YEAR AGO YESTERDAY a judge was kidnapped in his own court at the Marin County Hall of Justice at San Rafael, just outside San Francisco. A young black militant held up the court at gunpoint, and the judge and three black men died in the resulting gunbattle.

The incident was startling enough in itself, and as an indication of how fierce racial divisions now are in California. For many blacks, it was a heroic revolutionary act. For many whites, it was a culminating violation of law and order.

The shoot-out at San Rafael is intimately connected with two other current causes célèbres. Both will be in the headlines for many months to come: One is the trial of Angela Davis, the beautiful black militant intellectual who is charged with murder because she is alleged to have provided the guns that were used at San Rafael. The other is the case of the so-called Soledad Brothers. Since the recent publication of his letters, one of them, George Jackson, has been hailed as the most important black writer to emerge since Eldridge Cleaver wrote *Soul on Ice*.

But the San Rafael incident, the Angela Davis trial, and the case of the Soledad Brothers can only be understood if they are placed in context: as three bloody acts in a tragedy, which has developed with the murderous inevitability of a mediaeval blood-feud.

It is one of those tragic dramas in which the central character is not any one person, but a place, or rather in this instance an institution: the California State Correctional Training Facility at Soledad, a vast grey complex of buildings, surrounded by trim lawns and lovingly tended flowers.

The tragic irony lies in the fact that when Soledad was opened, only 25 years ago, it was widely regarded as the most progressive

prison in the world's most enlightened penal system. As we shall see, no such claim could reasonably be made for it now.

TOGETHER WITH the other two Soledad Brothers, George Jackson is charged with murdering a guard in Soledad, and faces a mandatory death sentence. One of the paradoxes of the story is that in most penal systems he would not have been in prison at all when the murder took place.

In 1960, when he was 18, Jackson pleaded guilty to a charge of second degree robbery. He was driving the getaway car while a friend stole \$70 (then £25) from a petrol station. The boy who actually stole the money got out of jail in 1963. Jackson has been there ever since.

What happened was that he was persuaded to plead guilty by the "public defender" (the equivalent of legal aid counsel) on the grounds that this would reduce his sentence. He then received an "indeterminate sentence": one year to life.

The time a man serves in California is determined by parole boards. This system had its origin in the benevolent idea that prison should be a process of rehabilitation. It follows from that theory that the prisoner should go back to society as soon as he is "ready."

In practice, this system puts the prisoners at the mercy of the guards. Any guard can, for almost any reason, give a prisoner a "115"—a bad conduct mark, which, entered on his "jacket," (file) will prevent him getting a date to appear before the parole board.

In the boom times of the 1950s and 1960s, with many more attractive jobs paying better money, the California Department of Corrections could not always attract the wisest and best of men to become

prison guards. From racist or merely authoritarian guards, a proud young black like George Jackson, who was determined not to put up with the slightest racial insult, could all too easily accumulate a steady stream of 115s.

A 115 on his "jacket" is by no means the worst a prisoner in Soledad has to fear. The "main-line," medium-security sections of the prison offer considerable facilities for prisoners to learn vocational skills or educate themselves—though black prisoners complain they have less opportunity than whites. Jackson himself read Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Fanon, Mao and other writers, revolutionary and non-revolutionary, in Soledad. But all such opportunities disappear when a prisoner is sent to the "adjustment centre."

The Californian prison system is fond of euphemism. Guards are "correctional officers." The prison itself is a "training facility." And the "adjustment centre" at Soledad was in fact a particularly barbaric deterrent. In 1966 a prisoner called Jordan successfully brought suit in Federal court under the clause of the United States constitution which prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment."

The court found that Jordan had been kept for 12 days in a "strip cell," 6ft by 8ft 4in, without heat or light. For eight days he was kept stark naked. The only facility in the cell was a hole for bodily wastes which he could not flush. He was only allowed to wash his hands once every five days. The stench caused him to vomit continuously.

The court commented in 1966 that such treatment "results in a slow-burning fire of resentment until it finally explodes in open revolt." But little reform resulted from the court's decision, and the superintendent who was named in Jordan's suit is still running Soledad today.

George Jackson spent many periods in the adjustment centre at Soledad. As it happens, however, he was not there on January 13, 1970, when the new "O" wing exercise yard opened.

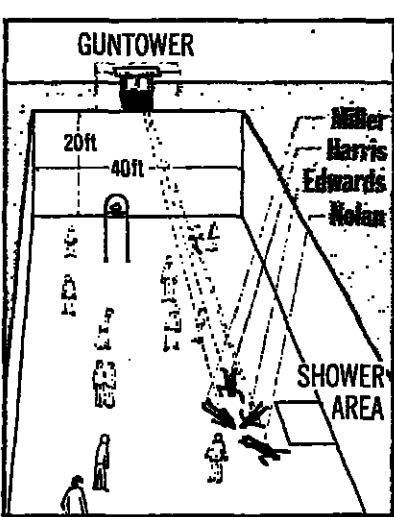
THE FIRST BLACK MAN into the yard that morning was a friend of Jackson's, a muscular black militant called W. L. Nolen. He was joined there after a few moments by Earl Satcher, the leading Black Muslim in Soledad, and then by five more blacks, most of them known as tough militants.

Each man, as he entered the yard, was made to strip and submit to a skin search of mouth, armpits, private parts and anus, to make sure he had no concealed weapons.

There is some conflict of evidence as to the identity of the other prisoners who were in the yard that morning. It was seen, however, that they included at least four "chicanos"—Mexican-Americans, many of whom are strongly hostile to blacks—one Hawaiian and one Samoan, and that the rest were white. The whites included a man who has been described by a Soledad psychiatrist as a "virulent Southern racist," who had threatened Nolen the night before.

Nolen had another enemy in the exercise yard that morning, a guard he had punched in an argument some months before. This was O. G. Miller, who was stationed in a wooden tower some 20ft above the yard. He is an ex-army marksman, and he was armed with a .30 semi-automatic carbine. For a few minutes, the blacks exercised, thumping a handball against the concrete wall of the yard, and working out on a punch-bag. Then Nolen and another black prisoner walked towards the white man who had shouted at him the night before. A fight started. Within seconds three blacks and four whites were involved. Then guard Miller fired at the blacks.

Nolen was hit first, in the femoral artery. Then Edwards, then "Jug" Miller, both in the chest. Finally one of the white men who had been fighting, Billy D. Harris, was shot in a testicle as he ran away from the group of



The yard at Soledad in which, during a race fight between convicts, three blacks were shot dead by a guard in the watchtower.

wounded men. The shots were spaced and apparently coolly aimed. Though the prison authorities maintain that guard Miller blew a whistle before shooting, black eyewitnesses insist that he gave no warning before opening fire.

One of the blacks who had not been hit called to Miller, to stop him shooting: "It's all over with." "Well it better be all over with," Miller shouted back.

It was, indeed, all over for one of the three blacks, who died instantly. But for 15-20 minutes the other two bled to death in the yard, while the four black survivors begged the guards to be allowed to take them to the prison hospital. The prison authorities maintain that a fight started which was so murderous that O. G. Miller, after his warning whistle had been ignored, had no alternative but to fire. This version does not satisfactorily deal with a large number of disturbing, not to say sinister, facts:

1. Race relations in "O" wing had been so bad that for two years whites and blacks had never been allowed to exercise together. Yet on the very first day the new exercise yard was opened, several of the leading black militants were put in it with several virulent white racists.

2. Guards, white prisoners and blacks all expected trouble when the new yard opened. One black inmate wrote that guards "continuously didn't forget to remind us of the yard opening soon," and that taunting white inmates "would pass my cell asking me—'are you coming' out when the yard opens?"

3. Nolen told his father that he had been marked down to be killed. "Jug" Miller also wrote to his family a week before his death, telling of his fears.

4. A large number of guards had gathered to watch the opening of the new exercise yard. Quite apart from the fact that these men, representing a large proportion of the guards at Soledad, and almost all armed, could presumably have stopped unarmed men doing each other serious harm without shooting them dead, the question is: what did they expect to see?

THREE DAYS AFTER the killings, the local district attorney made a statement about the case. He was still investigating it, he said, but he didn't think he would prosecute O. G. Miller. His action had been, the DA said, "probable justified homicide by a public officer in the performance of his duty." About half an hour after this statement was broadcast over the prison's radio system, a white guard called John Mills was found lying in a pool of blood in "Y" wing, in the ordinary, medium-security part of the prison. He was dead: he had been thrown over the third tier balcony on to the concrete floor 30ft below.

All 138 inmates of "Y" wing were interrogated, and finally, after 11 days, three blacks were charged with the murder of Mills: John Cluchette, Fleeta Drumgo, and George Jackson. The Soledad Brothers.

All three deny the charge, and

maintain that they were watching television, in the presence of a large number of other prisoners, at the time Mills was killed.

At first the Soledad Brothers were held incommunicado. Then John Cluchette managed to smuggle to his parents a note which said simply: "Help! Life in danger!" When the normally self-possessed Jackson saw a black California senator on February 1, he "appeared in shackles and chains and was trembling so severely that he was unable to light his own cigarette."

Once the news was out, well-known lawyers were briefed for the three accused, and committees were formed to raise money for their defence. Angela Davis joined the Los Angeles committee: she was already well-known because she had been sacked from her job teaching philosophy at UCLA on the grounds that she was a Communist. She went to visit the Jackson family, and made friends with George's 17-year-old brother Jonathan, who became her body-guard.

Jonathan had not seen George, except rarely through wire mesh in prison visiting rooms, since he was seven. But by letter George had painstakingly brought his younger brother up as a militant.

In June Jonathan wrote in his high school magazine: "People say that I'm obsessed with my brother's case. It's true. I have but one question to ask: What would you do if it was your brother?" His answer was not long in coming.

THE PRISONER IN THE DOCK in the Hall of Justice in San Rafael, a vast white zigzag which was the last building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, on August 7 last year was a black convict from San Quentin called James McClain. He was charged with stabbing a guard in the course of a riot after another black prisoner had been shot dead. Four more convicts from San Quentin were in court, in chains, to give evidence.

About 11 o'clock in the morning Jonathan Jackson walked into the court carrying an airline bag. As a policeman moved over to inspect the bag, routinely, Jonathan pulled a gun and shouted: "This is it! Everybody freeze!"

Covering the court with a sub-machine gun, he tossed guns to McClain and the convict witnesses. They took the judge, the prosecutor and three women jurors as hostages and escaped from the courtroom with a sawn-off shotgun taped to the judge's neck.

The group of five hostages and five captors made its way out of the building. They reached the car park, where a yellow rented van was waiting.

But before they were free, they had to drive under one of Wright's massive arches. More than 100 armed police and prison guards were waiting for them. Someone blocked the road with a police car. Both sides opened fire, but all the casualties were in the yellow van. The judge was killed. So were Jonathan Jackson and two of his black allies.

The raid on the courthouse was not merely an angry protest. It was a calculated risk, inspired by the urban guerrillas of South America, who use kidnapping as the only tactic they consider available. As he left the Hall of Justice with his prisoners, Jonathan shouted "We are the revolutionaries! Free the Soledad Brothers by 12.30!" His plan apparently was to take over a local radio station and try to use the judge as a hostage to get his brother freed, and also to call attention to the conditions of black prisoners in Soledad.

"We reckon all the time in the future," wrote George Jackson when he heard of his brother's death, "from the day of the man-child's death. Man-child, black man-child with submachine gun in hand, he was free for a while. I guess that's more than most of us can expect."

IN THE LAST YEAR, things have gone from bad to worse at Soledad. Last July, a group of black mem-

bers of the California legislature managed to conduct a limited investigation of conditions there. They found that in "O" wing men were habitually locked up in a 6ft. by 10ft. cell for 23½ hours a day.

The legislators quoted inmates as saying that "some prisoners in the maximum security wing are permitted to throw urine and faeces at other defenceless prisoners," and that "cell doors are intentionally opened by guards to allow interracial fights at 3:1 and 6:1 ratios."

If even a small fraction of the reports they had received were accurate, the report concluded, then the prison staff included "cruel, vindictive, dangerous men who should not be permitted to control the lives of the 2,800 men in Soledad."

On July 23, 1970 a guard called William Shull was murdered in Soledad, and seven black prisoners were charged with conspiracy to commit murder. On February 2 this year, the District Attorney dropped all charges against four of the accused, and conspiracy charges against all of them for lack of evidence. This was because at least two of the prosecution witnesses testified in court that they had lied in their evidence against the accused. Defence lawyers were in possession of letters from at least five more witnesses who claimed they had been threatened into giving false testimony at preliminary hearings by the prison authorities.

There have been 10 murders inside Soledad since guard Mills was thrown to his death. In six cases inmates have been killed, either by guards or by other inmates, and in three cases guards were the victims. The tenth death was that of a prison administrator: two convicts walked into his office and stabbed him in the back while he was working at his desk.

In January 1971, just a year after the massacre in the "O" wing exercise yard, the "virulent Southern racist" who was in the fight with Nolen was allowed out of his cell by a guard "accidentally" to go to the showers when they were full of blacks. He was stabbed in the chest, but survived. What was the guard's motive? Rough justice, or a policy of divide-and-rule?

In June this year, in desperation, the California Department of Corrections started shipping prisoners out of Soledad. About 400 were removed to other prisons, and rather over 200 of those to a peaceful medium-security prison called Deuel Vocational Institute.

Within days prison officials said that Deuel faced "the kind of racism and violence that has made Soledad notorious," and the head of the California prison system confirmed "a vast increase in suspense and tension" at Deuel.

The authorities could hardly deny it: for already a lieutenant in charge of guards at Deuel had shot himself in his bathroom, leaving a suicide note blaming tension at the prison and saying that he was afraid for the lives of the men under his command.

Starting out with the best intentions in the world to rehabilitate criminals, prisons like Soledad have evolved under the pressures of racial conflict into colleges for training revolutionaries. They have already produced Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale and the other leaders of the hard new black militancy.

They have produced George Jackson, who has written that "there are only two types of men ever released from these places, the revolutionaries and the broken men. . . . The most dedicated, the best of our kind—you'll find them in the Folsoms, the San Quentins, the Soledads."



**Charles Lamb**  
could never have said  
his fond farewell to tobacco  
if he'd known about  
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Harold Hobson on different kinds of heroes

## WORLDS APART

IN MY OPINION, when the National Theatre is at its best, as it is at the New Theatre in Jonathan Miller's production of George Bernard Shaw's *Danton's Death*, it cannot be rivalled by any other company in the country. In the excellent translation by John Wells there are three performances which bear on their shoulders without flinching the weight and conflicting ideological worlds whose clash in great blocks of rhetoric, provides theatrical excitement of the rarest kind.

Christopher Plummer's Danton, earthy, human, at last recoiling from sending yet other armies of victims to the guillotine, in the September Massacre, should be in danger, and his massive strength exhausted, too weary to oppose the terrible cold flash of Robespierre's anger, is the finest thing he has done in England. Charles Kay's Robespierre, with his implacably gentle voice, damned, and his wintry smile is a masterpiece, revealing at a moment of the tortured and terror, that the tortures of the tortured were as nothing compared with the tortures of the torturer.

Finally, it is Ronald Pickup's Saint-Just, a portrait, lit with a lurid grandeur, of an idealist impelled by the force of his unselfish motives to stride to the shores of Paradise through seas of blood. Mr Pickup brings the first act to a close with a coup de théâtre more tremendous than anything to be seen in any other London playhouse: a speech comparing the progress of revolution with the cataclysmic forces of plague and earthquake which rises in intellectual passion to heights which could not be scaled with more frightening power even by the foremost actor in the National Theatre Company, the mighty Olivier himself. The thunder of Mr Pickup's rhetoric, the huge crescendo of his carefully spaced climaxes, its meticulously marshalled ideas, the overwhelming attack of its civil righteousness leave the audience breathless with admiration.

Danton was heroic; and so was John Mortimer's father, a successful barrister who was blinded in middle age, but never admitting it went on with his career, and sent his son to Harrow and Oxford. He never lost his gaiety, his enjoyment in life, nor his wit. Mr Mortimer tells his story in *A Voyage Round My Father* (Haymarket), which was first seen at Greenwich with a different cast. The various episodes are lively and delicate. It is a brave story, and a cheerful one, but nothing like as cosy as the enthusiastic audience seemed to believe.

Mortimer Senior says to his son, "In time of war resist the temptation to do anything heroic." It is incredible to me that so many clever people have failed to see the scorching irony of this. For Mortimer Senior himself omitted to be not heroic, and the cost to his family was very great. I am the last person in the world to underestimate the difficulty of the handicapped, but the real, searing penalty for disability is paid, not by the disabled, but by those who are with them—their parents, their wives and husbands, their children, and

their friends; by people who, with constant patience, see that they are not bumped into in the street, who help them up stairs, who stage-manage their public appearances so that they are seen to least disadvantage. My sympathies therefore are all on the side of the daughter-in-law who introduces into the play the moment of truth, when she exclaims brusquely, "Why do you all pretend that he is not blind, when he is?" The house shrank at this, but it was something that ought to be said. If Mortimer Senior had admitted his blindness, it would not have injured his career, but it would have made all the difference in the world to his gratitude, which received no utterance throughout the play, to those who helped him with such devotion.

The achievement of the play is that it shows Mr Mortimer's deep and true affection for his father, and yet perceives with unrelenting ruthlessness at how great a price to others Mortimer Senior's heroism was bought. Sir Alec Guinness plays the gallant, inconsiderate man with a quiet, assured flourish. Jeremy Brett as the browbeaten and ever affectionate son, Nicola, is a splendid daughter-in-law, and Leanne MacGrath as the uncomplaining, unrequited wife moved my heart. There is the true heroism, the everyday, unspectacular heroism that the world allows to pass by unnoticed.

To sit for three and three-quarter hours with one's head twisted round at an angle of forty-five degrees is hardly the most convenient way of judging a production of *Hamlet*. To put *Hamlet* into a strait-jacket and make Gertrude tipsy, as happens at the Cambridge, hardly seems to me to justify a new production of the play, even if it has the exciting Ian McKellen in the principal part. Despite his fire and passion, Mr McKellen appeared to lack any compulsive conception in his performance. The whole evening in fact created the impression of a Wolfist production without Wolfist.

To tell the truth, *The Avengers* (Prince of Wales), by Terence Peacock and Brian Clemens, is far more lively since it is ludicrous, bizarre, grotesque, funny and completely outrageous. The exquisite, Henry Jamesian point about its astronauts dropping dead, girls falling out of mummy cases shrieking "Knickers", and bodiless heads is that its hero, Steed, scarcely ever notices that anything unusual is happening at all. With the nonchalant confidence given to him by his bowler, his carnation, and his satisfaction at being an Old Etonian, Steed, in the realm of spy fiction, is a wholly original creation. Simon Oates on the stage is not as good as Patrick Macnee was on television. Even so there is pleasure in gained from passing a couple of hours in the company of the prince of decadence, as he moves casually through cataclysms and disasters incompetent, indestructible and charming.

Michel Saint-Denis, who died last week, brought a sort of salvation to the theatre in the Thirties, and though he was overtaken later by younger men his beneficence remained. There is no salvation in Andy Warhol's *Pork* (Round House). It is the only show I have seen in London which has no sign of any kind of talent whatsoever.



Ralph Richardson as Wyatt Gillman in John Osborne's new play 'West of Suez' which opens at the Royal Court on August 17 directed by Anthony Page

NEWS IN THE ARTS  
KENNETH PEARSON

London. It will cover two great kings, Edward III and Richard II, the Black Death, the Peasant Revolt, domestic life, and include the astrolabe which once, possibly, belonged to Chaucer himself.

● **IMPRESARIO** Eddie Kulkundis is to stage Alan Ayckbourn's new play, his fourth. Ayckbourn, best known for his "Relatively Speaking" and the current success "How The Other Half Loves", has produced a play even more complex than usual. The new play, *Me Times Me*, sets up three daughters and their husbands and then has them change around act by act. It opens in Leicester on August 25, in Edinburgh in September, then heads for London.

● **EIGHT MONTHS** ago I wrote about an opera, "The Visitation," which Bill Hays, now director of BBC TV's Playhouse, made for £75,000, and which had vanished. Someone at the BBC read the piece and did a double-take. Now Gunther Schiller's opera, based on Kafka's "The Trial", and re-set in New Orleans, has been scheduled for August 27 on BBC 2.

● **THE WHIRLING DERVISHES** will be leaving Turkey for the West for the first time in their

history. They will be appearing at the ICA's World of Islam festival in November. This Islamic order was established at Konya in Central Anatolia in the thirteenth-century. Their leader was the famous Islamic scholar Celaleddin Rumi. They are better known as the Whirling Dervishes. They whirl because, they say, God is everywhere, and in their dance they confront him everywhere. Hopefully, in November, just off the Mall as well.

● **PROSPECT** Theatre company has a packed schedule after Edinburgh where it launches *Learn with Timothy West*. It will then take *Learn* to Leeds, Norwich, Newcastle and Venice. After that a second tour includes *Love's Labour's Lost* at Stirling University's new theatre and both plays at the new Harlow Playhouse. They'll also stage *Endgame* at lunchtime at the new studio theatres in Stirling and Harlow.

There are a number of reasons, among them the dire slowness of the performance; what seemed to me curious inequalities of view among those concerned as to what kind of play they were doing; repetitive and over-elaborate realisation of events better suggested by Goldsmith's words. But the one that matters is that it was written for the theatre, it was meant to happen in front of an audience. It may be a comedy of manners, one of the glories of the English stage. Yet it is also, like a lot of TV comedy, a ludicrous exhibition, performed by characters invented for the purpose. TV comedy, however, never tries to stretch its welcome to two full hours. It has learnt that thirty minutes are about right, though you can stretch to forty or fifty provided that there is a serious contrapuntal theme (rather

## CHICHESTER 71

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## A seat in the stalls

TELEVISION □ OSCAR TURNILL

HAD I BEEN ASKED, before I carelessly acquired, free, my first TV set (an old console model like a vertical coffin, on which a dealer later allowed me £9 against a replacement, except that he didn't even want to see the old one, still less take it away)—had I been asked what I thought its principal benefits might be, these could easily have included the hope of seeing, say, Sir Ralph Richardson in something like *She Stoops to Conquer*. Why then, did I find myself looking so frequently at my watch when, last week and a dozen years later, that very event came to pass on BBC2?

There are a number of reasons, among them the dire slowness of the performance; what seemed to me curious inequalities of view among those concerned as to what kind of play they were doing; repetitive and over-elaborate realisation of events better suggested by Goldsmith's words. But the one that matters is that it was written for the theatre, it was meant to happen in front of an audience. It may be a comedy of manners, one of the glories of the English stage. Yet it is also, like a lot of TV comedy, a ludicrous exhibition, performed by characters invented for the purpose. TV comedy, however, never tries to stretch its welcome to two full hours. It has learnt that thirty minutes are about right, though you can stretch to forty or fifty provided that there is a serious contrapuntal theme (rather

IN A WORLD where even the senior citizens of jazz—Dizzy Gillespie, for instance—succumb to the lure of trendy rock settings, Duke Ellington is one of the few to remain blatantly his own man. Perhaps that is because no musician this century has been more idiosyncratic; whether he transcribes Tchaikovsky or country-style guitar or the call of a mule in the sound comes out unmistakably Ellingtonian.

His latest album to reach Britain, "New Orleans Suite" (Atlantic £2.15), is a document of great beauty and also of tragedy. It contains the final and most moving brush-strokes of the genius, Johnny Hodges, who died during the period of the recordings. His lazy-sounding solo on "Blues for New Orleans" is as fine as anything he ever did; and on "Portrait of Sidney Bechet," made after Hodges' death, Paul Gonsalves' intensely emotional solo seems to be for Johnny more than the nominal recipient.

The album as a whole is a terrifying reminder that, after almost half a century, the core of the great Ellington band really is disintegrating. The trumpet section reads: Mummy Johnson, Mercer Ellington, Al Rubin, Fred Stone—with Cootie Williams given separate star status. Very strange. Not that the music is destroyed, for every track is magical (the rhythmically exotic "Portrait of Wellman Braud" especially) and Duke seems able still to recruit the right men. Norris Turney, his newish flautist, gets better and better and trombonist Julian Priester, here recently and shunning with Herbie Hancock, appears like one of nature's Ellingtonians. Why, though, had we to wait so long to receive an album taped in April and May, 1970?

My remark about Dizzy Gillespie was not meant to be totally pejorative. Despite the rock-jazz, electric-bassified setting of "Souled Out" (Pye £1.45) he plays glowingly and cheerfully almost like himself. But when he

elevation to "play" status) or comic invention is so prolific—as in the case of the revived *Two Ronnies* (BBC2)—that it is not to be denied.

There was a basic error in trying to trick out *She Stoops to Conquer* in the studio, instead of taking it to the theatre, where this production was first staged. At a distance, somewhere in stalls or circle Sir Ralph's thoughtful Hardcastle, no mere country buffoon but sensible and courteous to a fault, might have seemed to be a man to be put upon; Tom Courtenay's Marlow might have seemed both less painfully sensitive, less obstreperously boorish. We might have been patient of such jolly romping, tolerant of all those wilful misunderstandings. We were offered too many nuances for such broad stuff; it does not do to become involved with figures of farce.

More real comedy was to be found in *Legal Aid*, the second of Granada's Irish series *The Sinners*, adapted by Hugh Leonard from Frank O'Connor. It wasn't trying to say anything very general; just a wry little tale of a servant-girl's paternity suit, the hearing of which took place in a court so uproariously as to make BBC's *Misleading Cases* (another welcome return) look like the Last Judgment. It was pleasant and unpretentious, and what matter if the adaptation didn't altogether shed the literary flavour of the original.

*Dominic Behan is neither a Goldsmith nor an O'Connor, but he knows how to provide the materials for a good television play. Ireland, Mother Ireland, which began a new series of Thames Armchair Theatre, was about warring factions of the IRA in prison in 1941 or 42. Two men awaiting execution for the murder of a traitor are given a break-out to take care of another. But they go to face the firing squad in the bitter knowledge that the job has been bungled. The play managed in that convenient Irish way to glory in the uselessness of it all, but it wasn't just a pathetic O'Connor, and it said things about ideologies and death, that are not nice to know yet are worth the reminder. It was directed stylishly by Piers Haggard, who controlled a large cast (with a towering performance from Barry Keegan) and kept the threads of plot clear, however obscure the politics involved.*

The other new play of the week was the facetiously entitled *One More on Top*, by Jonathan Hales for London Weekend. This was about the rival candidates for the union secretaryship at a bus garage, one of whom was sleeping with his mistress. I'd like to think better of it, because it was trying hard much of the time to show real people without glamorising them or romanticising their political aspirations. Maureen Toot's slightly sleazy wife suggested a performance for which there wasn't quite a part. In the end I'm afraid it was all rather slight.

isn't sounding off, the music, though pleasant, is anonymous—like the sleeve. Anonymity is non-art.

There is nothing unidentifiable about Attila Zeller, a little known guitarist who explodes on "Gypsy Cry" (Embryo, £2.15), with the fine piano of Herbie Hancock backing him. At first he seems to be Wes Montgomery reincarnated, octave-playing like the master. But he swiftly establishes himself as a ritually romantic musician with a touch of Django about him. A contender for the crown, Hancock is also heard on "Zawinul" (Atlantic, £2.15), whereon another player of electric piano, Joe Zawinul, creates with horns and rhythm those lyrical eddying sounds, underpinned by careful rhythms, which typify the latter work of both Hancock and Miles Davis. On the sleeve, Davis approves; and so do I.

## Musical maturity

MUSIC □ DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

seemed a perfect performance from Heather Harper and the ECO under Raymond Leppard. Another soloist, Maurice Gendron, then played Lennox Berkeley's *Dialogue* for cello and chamber orchestra, which struck me as the most successful of his recent productions and the most beautifully worked, even by the composer's high standards of craftsmanship. It is perhaps time that we stopped taking for granted Berkeley's fine sense of placing and proportion: workmanship of this kind—so free and graceful, so clear and concise—has become very rare.

There have been times when his basic material has seemed not quite worthy of such shaping skill; but here the two were in perfect equilibrium. A soft, unobtrusive discord for wind eventually gives rise to the theme of the finale; and a striking little figure of repeated notes and a dropping fourth, first for violins, then for the soloist, provides most of the material for the first movement, and is later transfigured to

form the suite melody of the central Lento. Nothing is forced, everything is natural; nothing wasted, everything turned to account. Although the scoring is light as air, the sensitive cellist dropped out of earshot once or twice, and might perhaps have allowed himself a stronger thrust. This is real music that deserves an early recording.

Next afternoon, Leppard and the same players, together with the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and the Ambrosian Singers, returned to honour the memory of that steady old friend of the festival, Sir John Barbirolli, in a programme called *The Splendours of Venice*. Though the important antiphonal effects had to be imagined, this was a superb concert, notable for several Monteverdi masterpieces and for some smaller and gentler works by Cavalli which held their own bravely in such company.

The climax of many celebrations of Sir Arthur Bliss's 80th birthday came on the day itself, last Monday, when the Prom

audience gave him a tremendous welcome after a first half devoted to his music played by his favourite orchestra, the LSO, and his old friend and (I dare say) favourite conductor, Sir Adrian Boult. If the "Things to Come" suite was included on grounds rather of popularity than of musical value, it was interesting to hear again the Theocritean contralto scene called "The Enchantress", which was strongly and fervently sung by Norma Procter. There is some darkly romantic writing for both voice and orchestra in the middle episodes, but rather too little sense of a general design in the work as a whole.

A magnificent performance followed of "Music for Strings," the undoubtedly masterpiece among the composer's larger works, in which his unflinching gusto is transformed into a wonderful grasp and elation of the possibilities of the medium, coupled with a continuous inventiveness in theme, colour and polyphonic device worthy of Elgar himself, whose First Symphony grandly concluded the programme.

During two dazzling BBC Symphony Orchestra concerts under Pierre Boulez it became still clearer that we are living in a Golden Age of the Proms—perhaps also, the Symphony Orchestra itself, now spurred by the vanguard.

Opinion is divided between those who feel that Boulez is squandering his creative talents on the concert platform, and those who value his conducting more than his composition; after hearing his agreeably tinkling but featureless "Edut/multiples." I incline to the latter view. His handling of Debussy's "Iberia" lost nothing in languor and voluptuousness from its extreme precision; and Stravinsky's "Petrouchka," apart from some trumpet mishaps, maintained an ideal frosty nerve. Mahler's Ninth Symphony, with the BBC's horns in particularly fine form, was given with a profound and elevating sympathy that failed only in a puritanical reluctance to allow the composer's marked ornament. Nothing in these two concerts surpassed the tender and delicate bloom of the accompaniments to Janet Baker's rapturously beautiful singing of Berlioz's "Nuit d'été" song. A golden age indeed.

## Cross-country airs

ART □ JOHN RUSSELL

hied for our much-hoped-for Museum of the Performing Arts. Afro is an artist too little known here, and his room in Liverpool is an sanctuary of well-bred old-style oil-on-canvas painting. Burri's pieces in wood, and in burrap, looked radical in the late 1950s and have now a period patina; but elsewhere there is much with which time has dealt cruelly.

As Professor Carandente says, there are "many Italian artists of the first rank" who have been left out of this show; Baj, at one extreme, and Santomaso at another would have added character to what is now distinctly a Roman choice of artists. Anselmo and other members of the Torino avant-garde couple have been substituted for others whose work seems to me a form of environmental pollution. The Italian heritage, as much in 1971 as at the time of the Futurist Manifesto, is an appalling burden; but there is some very touching about the "Copice

with perfumed and speaking trees and musical bushes under the sky" by Lucio Patella.

This piece is what its title suggests: a reconstructed copice, with inbuilt speech and music. It stands on a patchwork coverlet, which does duty for forest, and above it is a projection of moving clouds. Speech and music can be activated by the visitor; and the tape-recorded conversation on offer is not with the trees only, but with the woodworms which find a lodging within them. What they actually say is rather winsome, but as a participatory piece I prefer it to many a more pretentious undertaking.

Distinctly more modest is the show of Cuno Amiet (1868-1961) and Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933) which has been put on at the Kettle's Yard Gallery in Cambridge by the Pro Helvetia Foundation and the Arts Council. Neither is "a major figure," but Amiet was involved with the Pont Aven group, involved with pointillism, and the honoured

guest of Kirchner and the "Brücke" group in Dresden: his portrait of Hodler is the best we have. Giovanni Giacometti would have a place in art-history, in any case, as Alberto's father, and his "Alberto Giacometti Sculpting his Mother" (1923) makes up in immediacy what it lacks in formal control; but his "Self-Portrait with Snowscape" (1899) is a fine painting in its own right.

For an encouraging purview of younger British art I recommend the show by post-graduate students at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. This would suggest that the ambition, and the capacity, to make finite works of art is by no means extinct. I noticed in particular entries from the sculpture department of the St Martin's School: these should persuade us, if the McAlpine Gift at the Tate has not already done so, that Frank Martin, who has run the department in question for so many years, should be classed among our national treasures. For what he has produced (and this is not chauvinism, since some of the best artists are from overseas) is a whole crop of echo-less pieces owe nothing to the seniors who first made the class famous, and who came out very strongly too, with gifts not forced but maximised.

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